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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE AT 2007 UNGA

REF: STATE 125456

¶1. As requested in reftel, Post is submitting input for the President's September 25 Human Rights Roundtable at 2007 UNGA.

POST ACTIVITIES

¶2. Post supports human rights development in Iraq by maintaining dialogues with key Iraqi officials on human rights principles and legislation, building the Ministry of Human Rights' public administration and management capacity, and assisting non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Where possible, Post coordinates these efforts with international partners. Post also provides humanitarian assistance relief to refugees and internally displaced persons.

USG-FUNDED HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS

¶3. USG-funded programs conducted with NGO and host government partners in Iraq have provided assistance in the following areas:

-- Carrying out human rights monitoring and advocacy training for NGOs whose mandates include the protection of the rights of women, children, and religious and ethnic minorities, and establishing a Human Rights Defenders Network (HRDN) through the Free Iraq Foundation.

-- Collecting and cataloguing oral testimonies to gain a full record of atrocities inflicted against Marsh Arab community during the period 1991 to 2003 through the AMAR Charitable Foundation.

-- Providing treatment and assistance to torture victims from Saddam's regime to enable them to play an active and meaningful role in a post-totalitarian society through the Berlin Center for the Treatment of Torture Victims.

-- Preventing torture by training legal and health professionals to participate in anti-impunity legal actions to monitor the occurrence of torture through the Heartland Alliance.

-- Developing the Government of Iraq's efforts to establish a National Center for Missing and Disappeared Persons through the International Commission on Missing Persons.

-- Teaching human rights principles to a wide segment of Iraqi society in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Education through the Free Iraq Foundation.

-- Working with the Ministry of Human Rights to train Iraqi investigators to gather and analyze oral histories of human rights abuse victims through DePaul University.

-- Offering direct support for the Iraqi Constitutional Process, supporting Iraqi NGOs in public education and participation in constitutional development through the United States Institute of Peace.

-- Providing specialized research and training that expands and deepens the general population's understanding of the historical context, scope, legal underpinnings, and practical functions of a proposed Human Rights Commission through American University.

-- Fostering the emergence of independent media within Iraq by supporting the Iraqi Media Network, which oversees public broadcasting.

-- Highlighting Iraq's achievements in rule of law initiatives and progress in developing a transparent, modern justice system through engaging major Western print, broadcast, and radio stations.

-- Training women in the media to stimulate political dialogue to help galvanize support for women's human rights through the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR).

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-- Developing the Ministry of Human Rights' public administration and management capacity through USAID's Tatweer program.

-- Providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons with programs in sectors such as public health, water and sanitation and shelter through partnership with NGOs and international organizations. This assistance indirectly supports the rights of individuals.

IRAQ'S STRATEGIC DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES

¶4. The Iraqi National Security Strategy for 2007-2010 identifies promoting human rights as a political component for overcoming threats and realizing the GOI's interests. Toward that end, the GOI strategy includes adopting international human rights criteria within the national judiciary, including human rights education in the cultural and educational sectors, and reinforcing the role of civil society institutions by supporting their development and independence.

¶5. The Ministry of Human Rights has articulated strategic human rights priorities to establish an adequate infrastructure to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Its priorities include:

-- Enabling Iraqi citizens to enjoy civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights without any discrimination on the basis of race, sex, or religion.

-- Bringing Iraqi laws into compliance with Iraq's human rights obligations and amending articles in legislation that contradict human rights.

-- Spreading and disseminating the culture of human rights as an alternative to the culture of violence, dictatorship and persecution that existed under the previous regime.

-- Establishing an integrated database on the status of human rights in Iraq by adopting the human development indicators that are used by the United Nations.

-- Establishing mechanisms for coordinating with the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Displacement and Migration to enhance the GOI's work in humanitarian assistance.

-- Establishing effective mechanisms for coordination with civil society organizations and human rights activists to achieve shared objectives.

-- Promoting relationships with international human rights organizations, especially the United Nations and its different bodies, as well as regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States, the Islamic Labor Organization, and others.

-- Enhancing the Ministry of Human Rights' role in writing special reports on human rights, such as those related to the status of human rights in Iraq or those submitted to international organizations and committees overseeing the implementation of the conventions that Iraq has joined or ratified.

-- Working for the accession of Iraq as a signatory State to all international human rights conventions and treaties, with particular priority given to Iraq's accession to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

-- Seeking to establish the rules and requirements of peaceful coexistence and dialogue and to reject violence.

-- Archiving and documenting, by modern and scientific means violations suffered by Iraqi citizens under the former regime and afterwards, and publishing these documents as a record of an important period of Iraq's history and a lesson for future generations.

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